DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 133 730 CS 003 174

AUTHOR	Seittelmar, Elizabeth E., Ed.
TITLE	Reading in Early Childhood Education; Proceedings of the York College Reading Conference (1st, Jamaica, New York, April 27, 1974). DICTA No. II.
INSTITUTION	City Univ. of New York, Jamaica, N.Y. York Coll.
PUB DATE	Apr 74
NOTE	28p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Abstracts; *Childrens Literature; Conference Reports; Elementary Education; *Language Arts; Preschool Education; *Reading Comprehension; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Readiness; *Reading Skills; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

This booklet provides abstracts of the proceedings of a conference on reading conducted on 27 April 1974 by the Department of Teacher Preparation of York College of the City University of New York. The following conference presentations are discussed: "Reading Readiness--What Do I Believe?" (Lilyan Peters), "Preschool as a Language Laboratory" (Adelle Jacobs), "Beginning Reading Instruction with Immature Learners" (Alice Sheff), "Pre-Kindergarten Screening and Follow-Up" (Rose Flaherty), "Language Arts in the Open Classroom" (Frances Cacha), "Teaching Reading Skills through the Language Experience Approach" (Louise Matteoni), "Evaluation and Development of Reading Comprehension" (Grace Cukras), "Reading Comprehension of Children's Literature" (Phyllis Kornfeld), "Glass Analysis--A Decoding Approach" (Elaine Schwartz), "Sex-Role Stereotypes in Children's Books" (Harriet Bloomberg), "Listening Comprehension for Reading Readiness" (Marie Wittek), and "New York City Dialects and Reading" (Beatrice K. Levy). A bibliography of relevant readings and a list of conference participants are included. (KS)

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DICTA

Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man.

Frances Bacon, Essays on Studies

Department of Teacher Preparation
York College of the City University of New York
Spring 1974
Vol. II

CS003 174

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DICTA - (from the Latin "Dicta" meaning those things that have been said), a publication of The Department of Teacher Preparation, is dedicated to recording the essentials of any major conference sponsored by the department.

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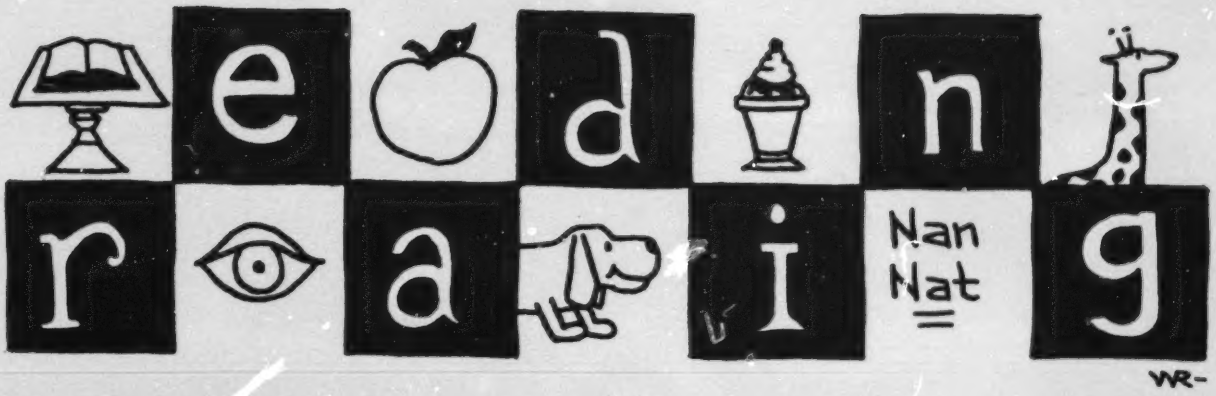

FOREWORD

On Saturday, April 27, 1974, the Department of Teacher Preparation of York College of the City University of New York sponsored its first Reading Conference. The theme, "Reading in Early Childhood Education," was selected for its relevance and significance.

Research has demonstrated that the early years are especially crucial for learning, and that pre-reading and early reading experiences and activities form the foundation for future reading development. Many of the reading problems that manifest themselves in later grades would not exist if early reading instruction were appropriate in quantity and quality.

Informational in nature, the workshops of the York College Reading Conference aimed to provide to both pre-service and in-service teachers of early childhood classes deeper insights, new ideas, and renewed enthusiasm for their roles as developers of pre-reading and early reading skills in the young child. Abstracts of each of the presentations are included in this volume so that others may share in the conference proceedings.

Laura Bursuk

GREETINGS

In its earliest planning, York College assigned the highest priority to the development of a Teacher Preparation Program which would meet the real and changing needs of our times. As a natural outgrowth of these goals, the Department of Teacher Preparation has broadened its commitment to service the professional and geographical community in which York has its roots.

In recognition of a growing local and national concern that many students were not achieving their educational potential, York College has initiated a major effort to prepare effective teachers of reading. "Since reading undergirds the entire curriculum,...since in every subject pupils' learning activities involve reading,...and since reading is such a complex task that it takes many years to master the skills that are involved." [1] there appears to be a necessary link between the preparation of an Early Childhood Teacher and the pre-service and in-service training of teachers in reading skills, theory, and techniques.

York College's Department of Teacher Preparation, addressing itself to the aforementioned concerns and objectives, was host to a Reading Conference on April 27, 1974. This monograph which records the essence of the conference, is offered in the hope that it will stimulate thought and action by both the professional and lay community which we serve. In this way, therefore, we propose to make available to children and adults the joy envisioned by Yoshida Kenko:

"To sit alone in the lamplight with a book spread out before you and hold intimate converse with men of unseen generations–such is a pleasure beyond compare." [2]

Wallace K. Schoenberg

During the past two decades, we have been engaged in a great debate, "Why Johnny Can't Read." Our national interests and concerns, consequently, encouraged studies on the ways and means of providing critical and creative reading instruction so that as many of our children as possible may attain maturity in reading. Federally and state funded compensatory programs were developed; a variety of innovative approaches, materials, and curricula were designed to meet the individual needs and differences of children in a culturally pluralistic society. The Carnegie Corporation, the Ford Foundation, and the United States Office Education cooperatively recognized the need to stimulate intellectually, pre-school children when they established The Children's Television Workshop.

The most vital role, however, is played by the classroom teacher who must understand the four components of reading: recognition, comprehension, evaluation, and appreciation. The teacher must also "recognize and promote the realization of the significance of learning through reading." [1]

From our very inception, The Department of Teacher Preparation has recognized and accepted its responsibility to prepare well-educated men and women as effective teachers dedicated to excellence. To fulfill this responsibility, our program for prospective early childhood and elementary school teachers places a high priority on curriculum, methods, and materials for teaching reading.

It is our hope that this conference will enhance the in-service and pre-service teacher's knowledge and understanding of current research findings on methods and materials for effective reading instruction and the implications for practical application so as to afford all children in this nation the opportunity of sharing in "all that mankind has done, thought, gained or been: it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of books." [2]

Elizabeth E. Seittelman
Chairperson - Dept. of Teacher Preparation

1. Dawson and Bamman, *Fundamentals of Basic Reading Instruction*, New York, David McKay Co., Inc., 1967.
2. Yoshida Keno, *Essays on Idleness*.

1. Celia Stendler Lavalelli, Walter J. Moore, Theodore Kaltsounis, *Elementary School Curriculum*, New York, Holt, Rinehart, Winston Inc., 1972, p. 220.
2. Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship: The Hero as a Man of Letters*.

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READING READINESS--WHAT DO I BELIEVE?

In order to be able to convince others of one's own beliefs, one's own philosophy, it is necessary to establish for oneself one's own credo. These questions might be asked:

1. What makes for reading readiness?
2. What is the learning environment that provides the best opportunities for the pre-schooler? the kindergartner? the first grader? the second grader?
3. Do I believe that:
   Young children are active, energetic, curious?
   Children's learning depends on their own individual rates of physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development and that often these have nothing to do with chronological age?
   Children have individual learning styles?
   Children need a friendly, accepting, and challenging climate to learn?
   Children need to make discoveries to learn?
   Children learn through concrete experiences?
   Children learn by feeling, tasting, seeing, smelling, hearing?
   Children need to have many and varied experiences to learn?
   Children need to move about to learn?
   Children need to talk, discuss, communicate with each other and adults to learn?
   Children need to interact with their peers to learn?
   Children's way of learning is playing?

If we believe the above, then what sort of opportunities can we provide that would best meet the needs of these young learning children? What program of reading readiness is best suited to their development?

What do authorities who have studied children's thinking, children's way of learning say?

The stimulus-response school of thinking subscribes to the idea that repetition brings about an increasingly strong learned connection. Gagne (as quoted in Bernard and Hawkins, P. 138) reports that a number of studies have failed to find evidence of the effectiveness of repetition for learning and remembering, and "that the most dependable condition for the insurance of learning is the prior learning of pre-requisite capabilities...enabling conditions."

From studies of Piaget, Isaacs, and Almy, we have learned that the quantity and quality of cognitive growth is limited by the extend and quality of previous learning or experience.

What does such research indicate for programs like DISTAR which is based on the premise of teaching reading through repetition? The program limits language and experience. It offers a splintered approach to language. It seeks to remove the "frills" from early education which are necessary preparation for reading.

Children need experiences that will build their concepts and language. This can be achieved through dramatic play, music, blockbuilding, and trips.

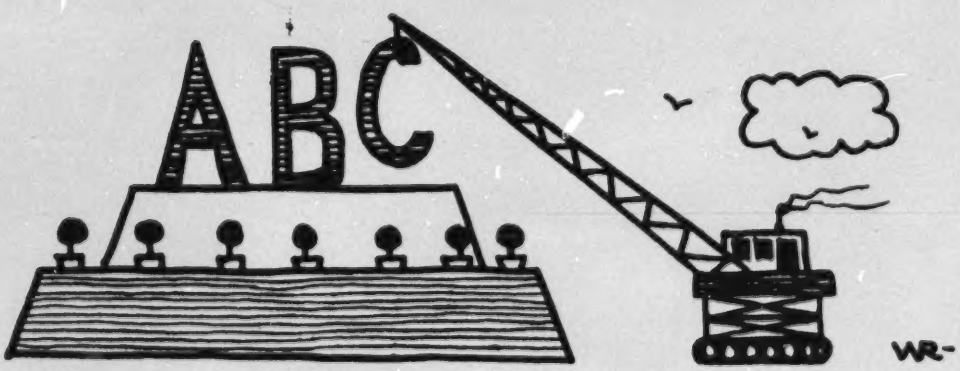
We need to surround, not inundate, children with language.

The teacher's role in this readiness process is a very active one. She is listening, observing, making notes, moving about among the children, asking open-ended questions, making suggestions, providing a new idea or material.

Parents are encouraged to come to visit, to share what is happening and why it is happening in the classroom.

We must keep in mind that reading is a most necessary tool, but it is even more; it is a source of pleasure. The aim of our readiness programs is that eventually we will have a comprehending reading population rather than a group of trained decoding parrots.

Lilyan Peters



PRESCHOOL AS A LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY

Concern about reading in early childhood education has become widespread in our land. To address ourselves to this matter realistically, we must remember and reaffirm what we already know and what seems self-evident: that learning to read depends upon learning language itself. Language is a system of symbols which stand for things or ideas or feelings. It has no meanings other than those which come from our own experiences, understandings, and feelings. Language does not begin to develop in the preschool; it begins to develop as soon as the child is born. A good preschool program offers opportunities for a young child to develop and extend the language he brings to school. The child is afforded opportunities to listen to language, to talk with adults and other children, and new experiences for clarifying and extending ideas. Young children are often talkative, but many of them will talk more to their peers than to adults, more while playing than in other kinds of situations, and more in an atmosphere where they feel emotionally safe and secure than one in which they do not. Young children are beginning to express their ideas and feelings in words; they need opportunities and freedom to practice these skills. Each child's language development depends largely upon his own personal experiences and on his understanding of his experiences. The wider the range of his experiences and the more ideas he has, the more he will have to talk about, and the more he will be able to listen to with understanding.

The preschool program provides opportunities for language use and language development in many activities throughout each day: in dramatic play which takes place in the housekeeping area, in the block play area, out of doors, or anywhere that children play out their ideas in order to clarify them, to test them, and to digest them. Usually interacting with others, they act out a variety of situations and roles. The range of themes they explore depends upon their experiences. This kind of play characteristically involves much verbal communication and the use of a varied vocabulary relating to the themes, the materials, and the props they use.

Manipulative materials used in preschool programs have many functions not usually associated with language development. The more children explore and play with materials, the greater their understanding of the characteristics and the relationships of the objects. Children need language to clarify and communicate ideas as their thinking develops.

Group trips and resource people who visit the classroom offer new experiences about which children can talk.

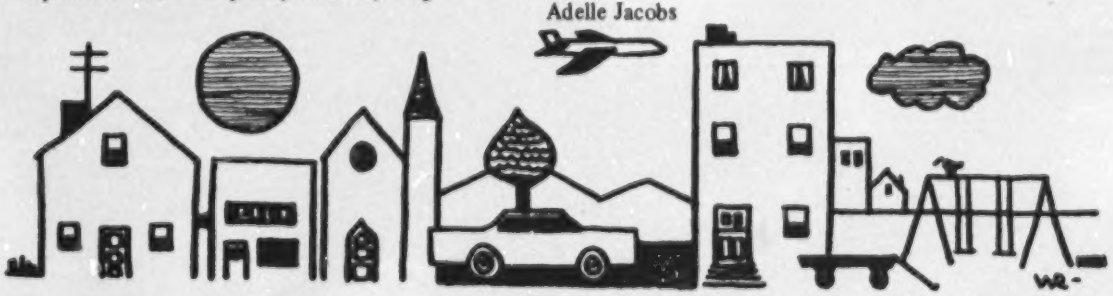
Some activities are more obviously related to language development. Stories and poetry read to young children contribute to the development of sensitivity to language, to the expansion of vocabulary, and to the learning of language structure. A teacher's attitudes and values are communicated as she reads to children; her enjoyment of stories and poetry helps children find pleasure in these and encourages them to become good listeners and, hopefully, to use language in new and interesting ways. In *A Fresh Look at Night,* Jeanne Bendick writes of rainy and snowy nights like this, "Rainy nights are like silk and satin. Snowy nights are like feathers and fur." Langston Hughes, in *April Rain Song,* writes "Let the rain kiss you...Let the rain sing you a lullaby...The rain plays a little sleep-song on our roof at night..." These are not only lovely for children to listen to, but they conjure up images which may inspire children to play with words and to use them creatively.

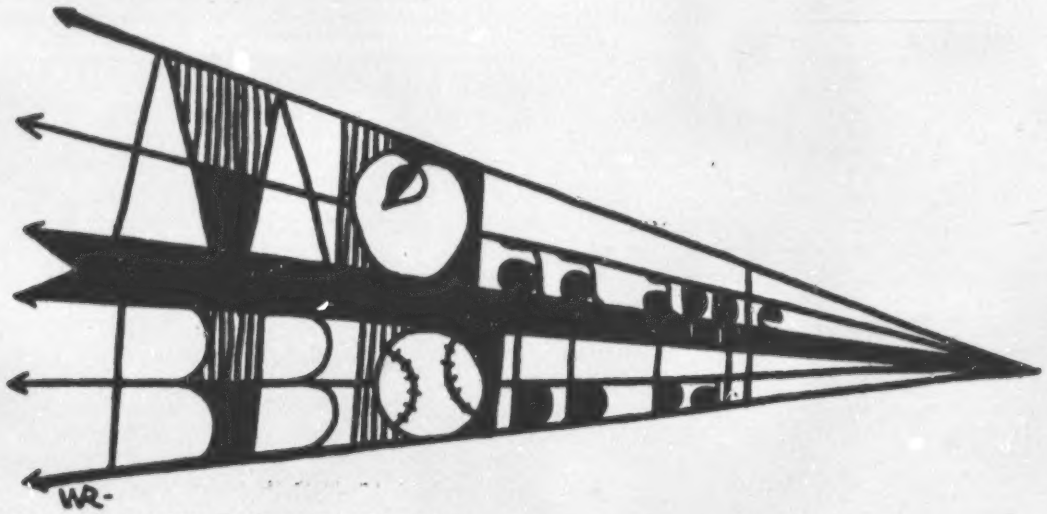
Discussions also help to develop language in young children. These may be held at any time and in any place. They may relate to school or to out of school interests and activities. For the most part, individual or small group discussions with young children are best. In group discussions, no matter what the size, there must be mutual interest and experience to talk about. It is hard for young children to sit still for any length of time, and it is hard for them to wait turns. They tire easily. For this reason activities such as *Show and Tell* are of questionable value. James Hymes, in *Teaching the Child Under Six,* (p.92) says that "It is beautifully designed to let one person talk, to let one person feel involved, while all the others wiggle or doze or let their minds wander. Young children need the fullest sense of being 'in' on what is going on. The larger the group the smaller the likelihood that children will care."

Preschool teachers often record the language of young children and then read it back to them. A child may dictate a story or a caption for a picture. When it is read back to him, it helps him understand that which is spoken may be written down and then retrieved by reading. In this way, the reading process takes on meaning; children come to feel that what they have to say has value and is respected. Grace Smith (p.134) says for children, "If you are my teacher and you write my words...I am learning that I can tell what I think and feel; You listen to my own way of saying it; You take me seriously; I am important." She then adds, speaking for herself, "And all along I have been convinced that this kind of communication has a direct connection with learning to read."

The preschool is indeed a language development laboratory. A good preschool program, through its variety of activities, provides opportunities for children to develop and use language skills all day long.

Adelle Jacobs





BEGINNING READING INSTRUCTION WITH IMMATURE LEARNERS

At the outset of each year, we can identify a group of youngsters who will not succeed in learning through conventional instruction. Currently, immature perceptual development has been named as one causal factor.

While a variety of pre-reading remains a problem. It is essential that we re-examine our introduction of beginning reading skills. This task should be analyzed in the light of what we know about child development so that we can more effectively match teaching to the learning style of these immature youngsters. We may then help avoid the frustration that results from an initial lack of success.

Research informs us that we first perceive objects in a general or global way. Discriminations are made largely on the basis of general form. Later, this becomes more refined so that while first, only one feature of the object may be recognized, in time the entire part-whole relationship is integrated and understood. The extent to which this can be efficiently accomplished is affected by developmental factors which influence a pupil's learning style.

How does this apply to reading? It has been found that many children have but a vague understanding of how reading "works." In order for a youngster to progress in reading, he must first be able to conceptualize the requirements of the reading task. Initial instruction, therefore, must first take place at a level to which this youngster can relate. Only then can he progress to more complex understandings required for word recognition.

Specifically, many children at the global stage of perception have an inaccurate awareness of what reading is at the word level. First, a child may be uncertain as to how many individual words make up commonly spoken phrases. Second, the child may not know that specific written words have a one-to-one relationship with specific spoken words, or that letter arrangements make for the difference in written words. At the global stage, there is also a gross confusion of similarly appearing letters since the youngster is as yet unable to note those differences which serve as distinguishing clues. Further, since letter arrangements are not noted, words similar in meaning are confused and substituted.

At the next stage, youngsters use one letter, usually the first or last, as a clue for recognizing a word. They fail to examine the rest of the word for further distinguishing details since they are at a developmental level where they are unable to delay their response long enough to permit further exploration of an unknown word.

Finally, with maturity, the learner has the capacity to scan a word and select those parts which provide accurate information in the light of the context.

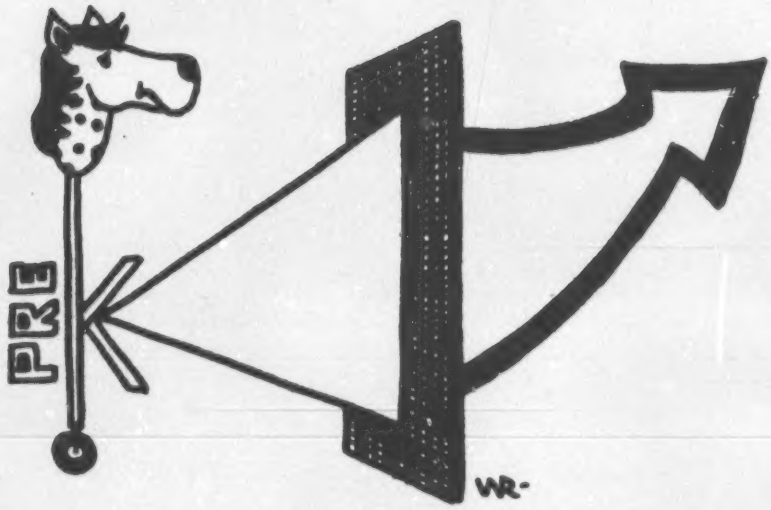
It is important that these children have a program at a developmental level where they can profit from instruction. As the reading concept becomes clarified, they should be helped to move into the next phase of understanding word recognition.

A program which has met with success is one of Structured Language Experience. Initially, by using their own words about things of present interest to them, it provides younsters with an understanding of how written words relate to oral language. The format is kept simple: only a few words are reinforced. These words are used in varying positions in a sentence. The youngster is asked to point and identify each individual word. Letter sounds are taught separately, and a small file box is used to file these words alphabetically. Reading is reinforced by writing activities; the child is required to locate specific words for use in his own written sentences. The use of initial consonant sound is stressed to help identify words of similar appearance.

When youngsters have become accustomed to discriminating between words on the basis of initial consonant, scanning is then promoted. Letter combinations are taught as clusters rather than through phonic rules. Children are taught to discriminate between words which begin the same by exploring the rest of the word for known clusters. This is still within the format of Language Experience sentences. Now, children are asked to become actively involved in responding to written material in the form of simple questions or following directions.

As proficiency increases, easy books are introduced: their content is incorporated into previously established activities. At all levels, work with these youngsters involves a combination of directed and self-directed activity that is aimed at developing independence at a level at which they can succeed.

Alice Sheff



PRE-KINDERGARTEN SCREENING AND FOLLOW-UP

The Fleishman Report, The Regents Position Paper on Educationally Handicapped, New York State Public Law 4408, and pressure from organized parent groups have stimulated current interest in and development of pre-kindergarten screening programs.

In the past, remedial and corrective programs have been effective to some degree; more fruitful in terms of time, money and a positive impact on youngsters, however, is the identification of these children before they fail. There is also a need to identify those children who, through early exposure to the media and close parental guidance prior to school entrance, are already advanced in cognitive skills. The majority of children, however, do not fall at either extreme but rather compose the equally important middle group.

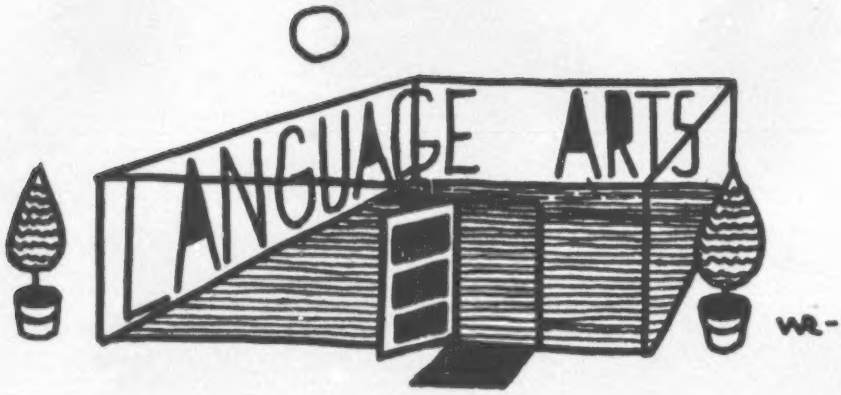
At the start, screening programs were set up to identify "high risk" children - children with potential learning problems. At the present time, there are a variety of pre-kindergarten screening programs whose objectives differ. Some identify only the "high risk" potential learning problem children and provide programs for their needs. Other programs are interested in identifying the advanced children in addition to the "high risk" ones. The objective of many recent pre-kindergarten screening programs is to identify strengths and weaknesses of all incoming kindergarten children in keeping with a philosophy of continuous progress.

The main focus of this workshop was on pre-kindergarten screening procedures and follow-up techniques. Most pre-kindergarten screening takes place during Kindergarten registration in the spring. Some programs, however, are held in the summer while others are started after school opens when the classroom teacher and children have had an opportunity to get acquainted. A numer of experts with the assistance of trained aides or volunteers are usually involved in a team approach to gather information on each child: kindergarten teacher, speech teacher, reading specialist, and psychologist. Pertinent information includes the child's general intelligence, visual-motor integration, auditory reception, general health, language development, behavior patterns and developmental history. Specific instruments used are the ABC Inventory, the Draw-A-Person, The Kindergarten Questionnaire (KQ), the Anton Brenner Developmental Gestalt Test of School Readiness, and the Vane Kindergarten Test.

Screening results are often used for further diagnosis and program planning. The profiles prepared for each child identify the strengths, weaknesses and needs upon which instructional programs are to be based.

Districts conducting succesful pre-kindergarten screening programs include Pleasant Valley, N.Y., Bound Brook, N.J., and South Huntington, N.Y.

Rose Flaherty



LANGUAGE ARTS IN THE OPEN CLASSROOM

Open classroom advocates insist that teaching should not be compartmentalized or fragmented. Reading and the other language arts as well as the subject areas should, therefore, be integrated; learning should be informal.

The Interrelationship of the Language Arts. Chronologically: listening precedes speaking, speaking precedes reading, and writing follows reading. It would seem that these language skills are interdependent rather than discrete skills. For example, although speech is developed through listening, it is actually a reciprocal process. A child listens to others and, in turn, needs an attentive listener when he speaks.

People hear with their ears, i.e. a physical ability, while listening is a cognitive ability. In reading, the eyes see the printed symbols on the page, and the mind translates the symbols into meaning. Both listening and reading are receptive language experiences which require the ability to decode. In the former, sounds are decoded; in the latter, symbols are decoded.

Speaking and writing, on the other hand, are expressive language experiences which require ability to encode. Speaking involves the ability to encode sounds, while writing requires the ability to encode symbols. Obviously, children require practice in both receptive and expressive language experiences.

Reading in the Open Classroom. Of paramount importance to teachers in the open classroom is the development of healthy attitudes toward reading. While they recognize that teaching appropriate reading skills is essential, they consider this objective a secondary concern. These teachers believe that they have failed as educators if, having mastered the necessary reading skills, their pupils as adults, never read for pleasure and do not seek knowledge.

Basal readers and workbooks from several reading series, along with reading skill kits can be seen in open classrooms. Some children may need to use many workbook pages while other children may not use them at all. Books are carefully selected from the local and school libraries Individual children's interests are considered in the selection of the books which are attractively displayed and accessible.

A quiet reading corner is an essential part of the open classroom. The area is carpeted so that children can sit on the floor and read if they wish. If possible, comfortable furniture such as a rocking chair, is also a part of this area.

Language Experiences. Communication, both as receptive and expressive skills, is stressed. Children listen to tapes and records, talk, and plan with one another. They listen to stories read by adults or older children and often act out such stories; thus oral and written language are linked. Children may express themselves through painting and other creative arts, an important foundation for thinking skills and later for reading comprehension skills.

Through language experience, the child is introduced to writing. Initially, he forms letters that the teacher has printed. As he learns a sight vocabulary, he begins to write the words he recognizes. A child may dictate short stories onto tapes and listen to them as they are played back. The teacher will also write the child's stories and leave room under each line for the child to copy his own words. As the child's language skills increase, he writes more stories.

Selection of Materials. Materials are supplied with great diversity of interest and range of abilities; some are designed to be used independently by children. These materials are attractively arranged in interest areas and are readily available to children. A conscious effort is made to select materials which require both convergent and divergent responses. Materials are changed frequently when appropriate. The teacher chooses materials according to the cognitive needs and particular learning styles of individual children. Diagnostic and prescriptive skills on the part of the teacher, with an efficient record keeping system, are essential.

Preparation of Materials. As mentioned above, a variety of commercial materials are used in the open classroom. Included are charts, texts, workbooks, tapes, study kits, pictures, study prints, manipulatives, games, worksheets, trade books, maps, etc. Teachers tailor-make materials for the needs, interests, and learning styles of their students. Favorite stories are put on tapes for children to listen to and follow in the book independently. Tapes are also used to develop or reinforce various language arts skills. The

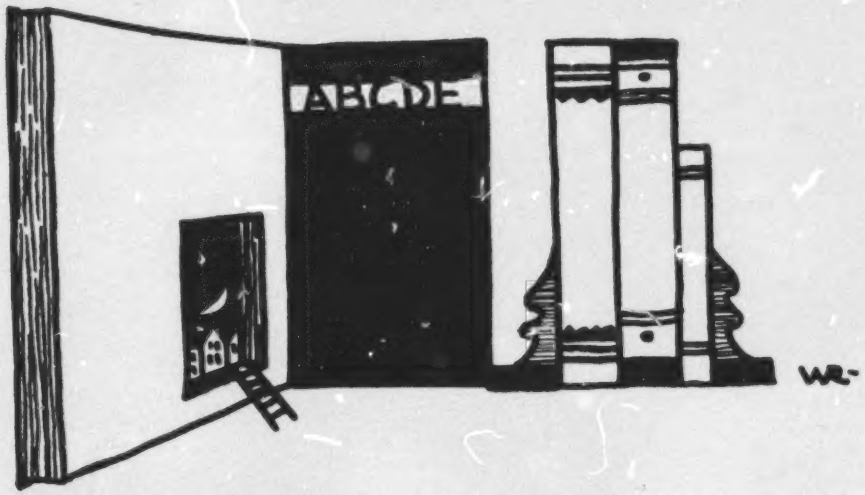
teacher tapes content from science and social studies; the text is written in booklets with appropriate pictures obtained from magazines and old textbooks. Worksheets may be designed to accompany the tapes and booklets. Story problems are taped, and children write equations to correspond with the problems which they may write and/or tape.

Activity cards are also prepared for the child to read and to follow directions; some items require a convergent answer while other items encourage creative thinking and expression through various activities.

The teacher-made materials are protected so that they can be used by many children. Some schools purchase a machine to laminate the materials. Clear plastic envelopes may be purchased or clear contact is used to cover the material. Page protectors for 8½" x 11" pages are also available. Such materials can be written on in different colors with grease pencils or crayons; later, the writing can be rubbed off. Often, answer keys are supplied so that the materials are self-correcting.

The teacher in the open classroom sees the whole curriculum as an opportunity to provide receptive and expressive language experiences. A well-planned and organized environment with diverse materials is a key ingredient.

Frances Cacha



TEACHING READING SKILLS THROUGH THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

The language experience approach to reading relies heavily upon the expertise of the teacher to recognize the reading skills as they appear in materials developed from interaction between teacher and child(ren).

Initially, the teacher engages the child(ren) in a discussion of an experience in which the child has participated. From this discussion, the teacher elicits a child-dictated story which is recorded on the chalkboard or on a chart tablet. Important as this is to language development, it is but the first step in the teaching of reading skills at various levels.

At the readiness level, as the teacher reads the chart or story back to the child, she runs her hand under the words being read. The child comes to understand inductively that what he has said can be recorded by symbols, that certain symbols recur more often than others, and that words, which have been recorded by symbols, may be recalled by one who knows the code.

In addition, the child notes that the teacher's hand (and, therefore, the reading) goes from left to right, that the voice stops at the end of the line, that the hand (reading) moves from the end of one line to the beginning of the line directly below. He may observe that symbols at the left are usually tall (capital letters). When there is a short pause in speech, there is a blank space between the symbols. When there is a drop in the voice followed by a longer pause, there is a dot (period) after the last symbol.

Although the above aspects of reading may not be identified explicitly for the child, the knowledgeable teacher develops the skills through continuous reinforcement. For the child, they are a natural accompaniment to a personal experience.

In addition to readiness experiences, almost all reading skills identified with primary reading can be developed through the language experience approach. Aware of the sight vocabulary for reading simple primer-type books, the teacher structures her questions in such a way as to elicit this vocabulary. Actually, it is difficult to think of any personal story that does not include words such as: *we, I, is, are, the, and, of, go, big, little, come, work, will, have,* and so on.

As words of high reading utility appear on the charts, there are a variety of vocabulary reinforcement activities which the teacher may use to fix this vocabulary. In addition, as words with recurrent phonic elements become part of the child's listening/speaking vocabulary, these words become part of the auditory and visual discrimination activities - steps in phonemic analysis.

Similarly, comprehension skills may be practiced with the content of experience charts. Selecting a title for the story (chart) leads to identification of the topic. Discussion of the most important thing the story (chart) tells about requires discussion of the main idea. Construction or dictation of the chart requires the child to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant details in proper sequence.

Discussion of the adequacy of the story for a variety of purposes reflects critical evaluation at a most natural level. Critiques by the author or a group member are other aspects of critical evaluation.

The preceding resume is a rather superficial description of the use of the language experience approach to teaching reading skills at the primary level. But perhaps even in the brief discussion, it is evident that the language experience approach relies upon the teacher rather than prepared materials. The teacher, through skillful questioning, elicits the story (chart) from the child. Then, using the story, the teacher identifies the skill(s) to be developed or reinforced and provides the appropriate activities.

This eclectic approach is one which truly meets the child at his level of language development and uses his own vocabulary and experiences as a springboard for reading. Implications for use with children for whom English is a second language or children with different language patterns are obvious.

Louise Matteoni

EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF READING COMPREHENSION

A major objective of the instructional program in reading is to develop reading and listening comprehension abilities so that a pupil can effectively derive, interpret, and apply concepts contained in print. Underlying all comprehension abilities or skills are the comprehension processes or levels: literal, interpretative, critical, evaluative, and creative reading levels.

Children must be given opportunities to develop each of these processes or levels. In designing a program for the classroom which provides these opportunities, the planner must skillfully broaden children's cognitive strategies and interpretative competencies.

Questions serve both to develop interpretative competencies and cognitive strategies and to provide the bases for diagnosing comprehension ability. Different types of questions should be designed for different types of comprehension skills. Analysis of the specific skills involved in the comprehension processes and the formulation of questions focusing on each skill must be carefully and thoroughly planned.

Questioning strategies, an important instructional tool, can greatly increase children's ability to develop comprehension competencies and levels as substantiated by research. It is important to understand the basis for using different questioning strategies in order to improve comprehension levels and to develop competencies within these levels. This valuable instructional tool can stimulate thinking and enhance the cognitive process. To ask useful questions, teachers must be aware of various levels of thinking in the classroom and examine their questions to determine the level at which they are directing their student's thinking.

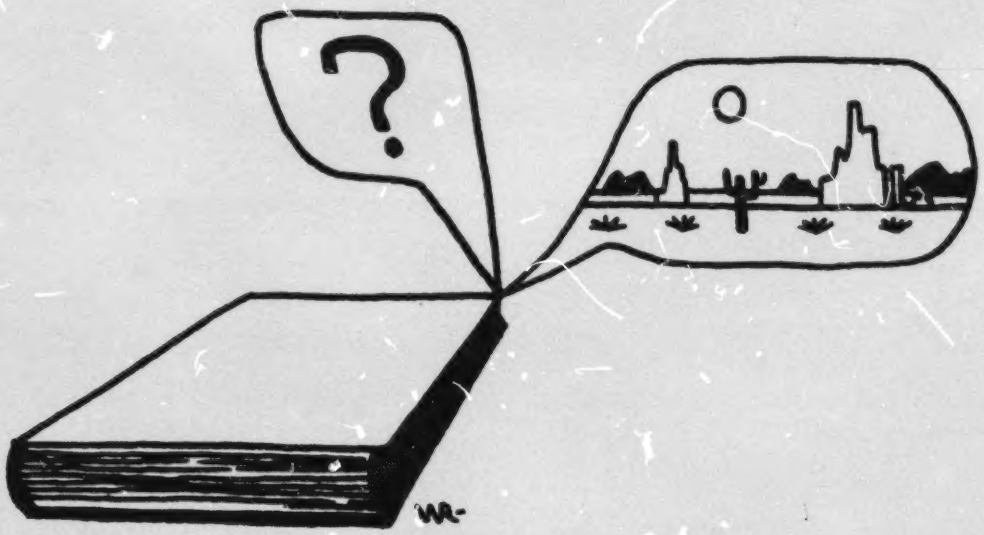
To develop comprehension skills, the teacher must: (1) identify the comprehension skills requiring attention, (2) select material that lends itself to the use of that skill and (3) prepare questions or assignments that require the use of that skill. The development of different comprehension skills requires the implementation of a variety of materials.

Instruction to develop comprehension can utilize either oral or written material. If oral materials are used, practice in listening comprehension can improve reading comprehension as well as identify comprehension problems. The teacher can read aloud and discuss with the class the fundamentals of the thought processes implicit in the selection. A discussion and lesson can also be developed from pictures which depict a particular thought process.

At times, after reading a particular story and holding a discussion of a particular skill, there may be a need for additional work. In such instances, the teacher should spend the next lessons working with the same children. The teacher will tailor-make materials and assignments to develop the student's ability to apply certain thinking processes to the art of reading. Specific lessons will be planned that will enable the child to analyze and relate the various elements of a sentence in order to arrive at the intended meanings. These lessons would focus upon the structure of language which provides clues to meaning. For example, the connective "because" indicates a cause-effect relationship.

Comprehension skills can be developed by a myriad of activities. One's creativity and effort are the only limits.

Grace Cukras



READING COMPREHENSION OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

This workship focused on meaningful questioning as an effective means of developing reading comprehension. The question, then, that logically arises is: what is "meaningful questioning?"

As a means of exploring the topic of questioning as it pertains to a literary work, selected parts of *Jazz Man* were read and discussed. It was generally agreed that children become annoyed by the kind of question that does not lead to either understanding or enjoyment of the story. A question on a minor detail not only requires the unnecessary performance of a low level cognitive, thinking task by the student but probably also detracts from his enjoyment of the story.

On what, then, should skillful questioning focus? As the story was read, the workshop participants came to realize that the story stressed the major character and how he coped with his circumstances. His surroundings were vividly portrayed. Within the first two pages, the author has subtly but skillfully established that this story could, indeed, have taken place. The mood was realistic. The three elements of story, therefore, that need to be developed are: character, setting, and mood.

As the story unfolded, it became apparent that the plot developed from the nature of the major character. The character coped with the story incidents; from his experiences, the plot progressed to a climax and a denouement. *Jazz Man* is a contemporary story; the story element of "Time" in this story, is "now."

A discussion arose, then, as to whether or not this story should be made available to children because it is near-tragedy. One participant felt that it was unsuitable for children. Several points emerged from this discussion. The danger of censorship is, indeed, a danger, but a teacher who is uncomfortable with a story should not attempt reading it aloud since his feelings about the story may negatively influence the reading-listening experience for his audience.

The participants discussed, in a general sense, commercially-prepared comprehension materials. It was concluded that these materials can be most effectively used by the teacher who analyzes the questions asked by these materials and who then eliminates those that do not contribute to an understanding of the story; the teacher should provide teacher-made questions that focus on the elements of story neglected by the commercial materials. Reading comprehension questions for fiction should center around the story elements of: character, setting, plot, time, and mood.

Phyllis Kornfeld

GLASS ANALYSIS - A DECODING APPROACH

The Glass Analysis Approach was developed by Dr. Gerald Glass and the staff at The Adelphi University Reading and Study Center in Garden City, New York. The approach separates the teaching of decoding from the teaching of comprehension.

With this method, the pupil develops mental sets or is conditioned to examine words in a visual and auditory way to form particular habit response patterns. From studies of successful decoders, particular letter-sound clusters which naturally come together were identified. These constitute the basis for the clusters to which the child is perceptually conditioned. For example, in the word *playful*, the clusters /pl/, /ay/, and /ful/ are isolated and taught. As one sees these clusters often enough within whole words and associates these with their accepted sounds, a conditioning process which becomes ingrained results in the beginning of a decoding process.

The specific steps in the Glass Analysis Decoding Approach are:

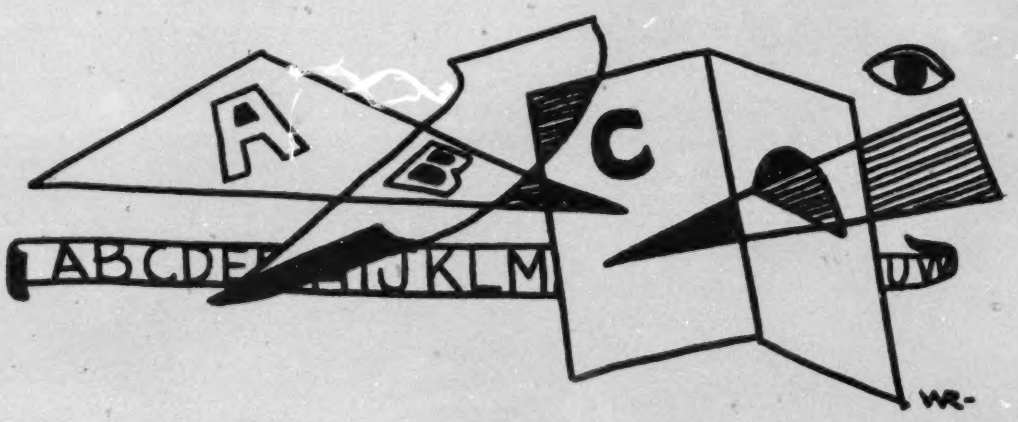
(1) A whole word is exposed to the child who is told the word. (e.g., *black*)

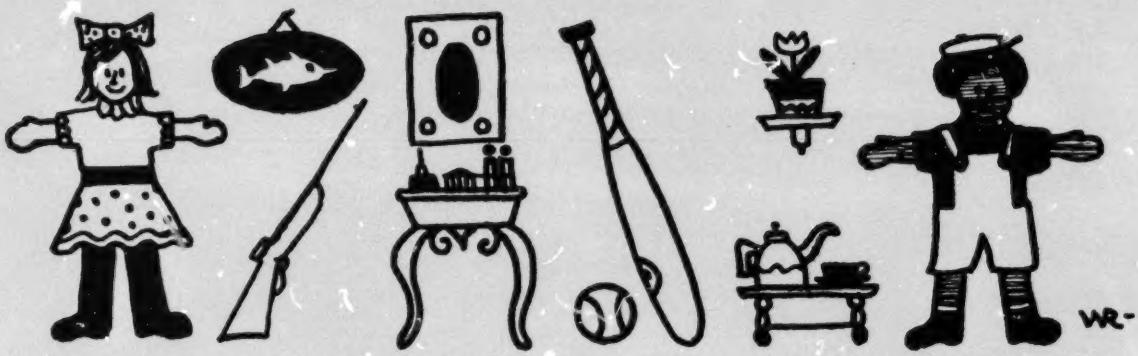
(2) The child is perceptually conditioned through the teacher's questioning to noteworthy clusters in that word (e.g., the letter-sound clusters of /bl/ and /ack/ in the word *black*). The specific questions the teacher asks are:
   (a) What letter or letters make the sound? (e.g., the /bl/ sound and the /ack/ sound).
   (b) What sound does the letter or letters make? (e.g., the letters *bl* and the letters *ack*).

(3) The child says the whole word.

After these steps were described, there was a demonstration of a pupil-training session; each participant had an opportunity to practice the method.

Elaine Schwartz





SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPES IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

In America, male and female grow up different and unequal. Our culture teaches that the sexes occupy different roles with the role of the female being subordinate to that of the male. The effects of this pattern of socialization appear early in a child's life.

Bloomberg has demonstrated that by four and five years of age girls have acquired a constricted view of the occupational roles available to them. In response to the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" girls listed 17 occupational roles while boys of the same age listed 26 roles. Non-occupational responses for the girls accounted for 22.7 percent of their total repsonses, 6.6 percent for the boys.

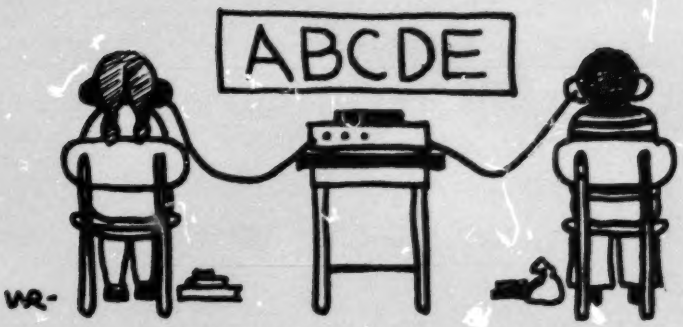
The pattern of socialization begun in the home is reinforced in the school and by the media. Children's books mirror the sex-role stereotypes of the culture. In this way, they teach and reinforce the doctrine of different and unequal. Studies of children's books have revealed sex-role stereotyping in varying degrees. The two studies cited below demonstrate the dimensions of the problem.

In an analysis of 2,760 stories in 134 elementary school readers in use in the New Jersey public schools, females were described in 26 different occupations while males were described in 174 occupations *(Women on Words and Images)*. In overwhelming proportions, males were depicted as being ingenious, industrious, adventurous, imaginative, brave, and capable of solving problems. Females, on the other hand, were described most frequently as being dependent, passive, and involved in domestic activities.

U'Ren's study of second-through sixth-grade textbooks (pp. 318-327), adopted or recommended for use in California schools, showed that more than seventy-five percent of the stories' main characters were male. Stories about females were restricted to domestic settings in which "girls rarely leave the confines of the family and rarely receive community recognition for their achievements; boys, on the other hand, are allowed great freedom of movement and choice." In all the stories, there was a subordination of sister to brother, mother to father, and female to male in terms of initiation of activity, solving of problems, and achievement of rewarding work goals.

If aspiration and occupational choice for male and female are to be based on ability and preference rather than on culturally prescribed stereotypic roles, changes must be made in the child rearing practices of the home and school. In addition, children's literature and media messages must present sex-role models which represent for both sexes the freedom of choice in attitude, behavior, and occupation which reflect the abilities and preferences rather than the sexual identity of the individual.

Harriet Bloomberg



LISTENING COMPREHENSION FOR READING READINESS

In the biological growth of the child, hearing is one of the strongest senses which helps unlock the mysteries of self and environment. At times hearing is used by the infant for information, approval, and reaction. As the child grows, hearing, the physiological process, becomes listening, an intellectual activity, which attaches meaning to the spoken. word. As the child continues to grow, he/she constantly learns through the coins of communication, spoken words.

The pre-school child acquires a listening and a speaking vocabulary.

A recent study by Smith has indicated that first grade children have an average vocabulary of 23,700 words (16,900 basic and 6,800 derived words) with a range from 6,000 to 48,000 words.

Since the pre-school child is not usually involved in the reading process, he/she acquires knowledge of the world from speaking, listening, and looking. Numerous major studies have treated speaking and visual perception, but what of listening? Until rather recently listening was the most neglected research area in education. Researchers such as P.T. Rankin, R.G. Nichols, Miriam Wilt, J.I. Brown have discovered areas for investigation and implementation in the effective teaching of listening. Rankin and Wilt treated the impact of listening on our daily life and as a basic tool for learning in the classroom setting. Brown published the first recognized listening comprehension test. Lewis demonstrated the effects of listening on reading achievement in intermediate grade children. Nichols was one of the leaders in the analysis of the basic factors in listening.

If we were to compare the basic skills involved in reading and listening, we could conclude that they seemed identical. Both reading and listening are dependent upon the same experiential background, require thinking and judgment, and possess inherent developmental sequence. Since these factors seem true, one might and should presume that listening skills, because of vocabulary advantage, should always precede comparable reading skills. Proficiency in listening contributes to readiness for reading.

But reading and listening experiences are essentially very different. The reader can: do so at his own pace, re-read, ask questions, and refer to the written material which is always available. In the listening area, however, the speaker's rate, the length of the talk, the finality of the spoken word all challenge the listener's ability to listen and retain the speaker's words. The fragile nature of listening is re-inforced when the listener feels a sense of a personalized encounter between the speaker and himself. At times, the speaker's diction, voice, and body language can reinforce or negate the experience for the listener.

It is the purpose of this paper to suggest that listening skills taught in early childhood education can be vital in the reading readiness program when the teacher has a definitive sense of the nature and levels of listening.

How does the teacher proceed to teach listening in early childhood? The teacher should:

Create a comfortable listening environment in a classroom that is informal, quiet, and creative.

Encourage respect for listening by approval, not punitive action for non-listening.

Encourage children to recognize the nature of listening.

Provide a wide variety of directed listening experiences for the children such as singing, music, story-telling, discussions, and creative dramatics.

These factors hinder the listening experiences of children. The child may be tired, sick, hungry, or have an undetected hearing loss. Perhaps the child is insecure, understimulated or overstimulated in listening experiences. We may, therefore, surmise that lack of experience or re-enforced practice in listening tends to hamper the teaching of listening.

These are the three specific listening levels of concern to the teacher: attentive, creative, and critical. These labels

of different listening experiences merely help to identify the desirable outcomes of listening lessons.

To teach the child to be an attentive listener, he must be motivated by a purpose. He must be taught to direct his full attention to the speaker (teacher or other); he must be taught to realize that he must be able to demonstrate that he did listen attentively. It is the responsibility of the teacher to be certain that whatever is spoken is clear not confused, brief not lengthy; definite follow-up activity is necessary. The teacher should be a good model for the children by listening attentively to them.

Creative listening blends the "new" of the listening experience with the "old" of the child's personal experiences. This listening level is the "internalizing" process when the child enriches his own avenues of thought and emotion. Imaginative, artful, delightful, enjoyable, are words usually associated with creative listening experiences. This level of listening requires the teacher to be a careful planner of sequential experiences, a tester of depth and perception, and a resource person with limitless ingenuity who knows her pupils and can enjoy with them.

Critical listening is questioning, thoughtful, and challenging. It requires the listener to compare and evaluate the spoken work in light of his previous experiences. It demands close attention, structured experiences, and a readiness to differ as well as to agree with the spoken word. The skills for this level can be developed in young children if the teacher has the vital quality of flexibility in accepting questions, in explaining real and apparent differences, and in utilizing the differences between fact and opinion. The critical listener must be free to discuss his views with the speaker or others in the class.

In summary, when you teach your students to listen, you have given to them the golden key to the house of intellectual and emotional success.

Marie J. Wittek

NEW YORK CITY DIALECTS AND READING

A dialect was defined as a speech pattern with characteristic features of phonology (including inflection and pitch), syntax, and semantics. English was described as a language of many dialects, which reflect the regional, ethnic, and/or socio-economic differences of speakers. Since the population of New York City includes people from a variety of linguistic backgrounds, it was anticipated that teachers in this city encounter special problems in communication.

Samples of variations of English which are characteristic of speakers who come from Chinese, Spanish, Yiddish, and Black dialect language backgrounds were presented. The ability of adults and children to understand concepts in terms of their own familiar linguistic experience was demonstrated. An example was used in which a past tense signal, the final /t/ in *walked,* was auditorily constructed and thought to be heard by the participants in the workshop because of the context of a sentence although it was not actually pronounced. Specifically, the sentence actually spoken by the workshop leader was "I *walk* to the window and saw my friend outside." The participants said they had heard the sentence pronounced as "I *walked* to the window and saw my friend outside." The audience 'heard' the concept of past expressed when they expected to hear it. Another example of a Spanish speaker's use of the definite article, *the,* in place of a personal pronoun, *my,* was offered as a situation in which the speaker probably used a translation pattern. In this example, the teacher asked a child, "What color is your dress?" and the child answered, "*The* dress is red." Native speakers of English would expect the child to say, "*My* dress is red." The child probably understands the concept of possession, but, since the possessive pronoun is not used in Spanish for describing one's garment, the difference in utterance was likely to be due to her use of a Spanish-to-English translation pattern in describing her own dress.

Black dialect was defined as a linguistic form which has patterns of phonological and syntactic features that are sufficient to be identified as an ethnic variant of English. Research was cited to provide evidence that, while many members of the group do not speak the dialect at all and that many others use the dialect inconsistently, there are enough dialect speakers so that their presence should be expected in New York City schools. It should also be expected that, since children hear language as they expect to hear it (as the adults did in the example above), problems may occur in the course of teaching reading.

Materials were distributed to illustrate phonological and syntactic points of difference between Black and Standard dialects of English. Among these features was the reduction of final consonants so that *meant, mend,* and *men* could be heard and/or pronounced as homonyms or rhyming words.

To establish auditory discrimination of phonemes in phonic analysis lessons, it was recommended that teachers take pupils' familiar dialects into account. This could take the form of first presenting words which would offer the least possible confusion for the children and then gradually moving to word pairs in which the distinctive difference of one sound might be more difficult to discriminate.

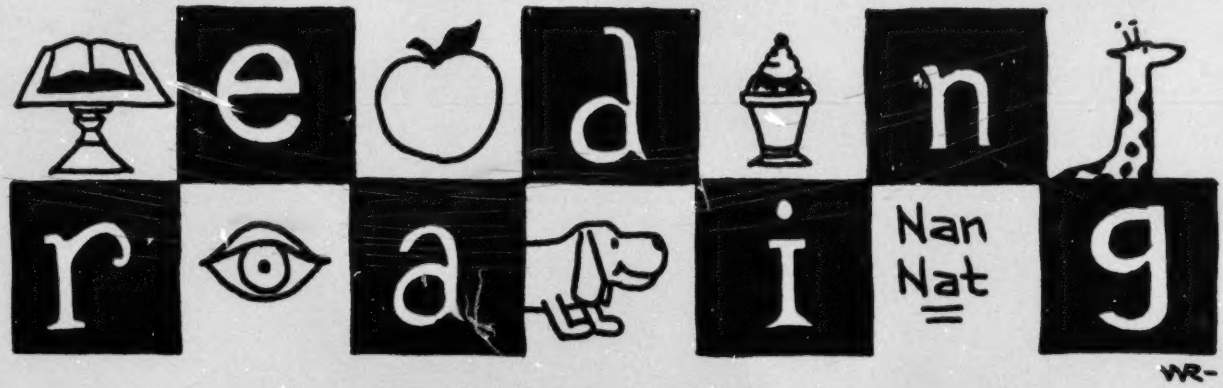
A sample of such a sequence was provided. The lesson dealt with the problem of the 'long i' (as in *time*) which is often elongated by Black dialect speakers so that *ride* and *rod* become homonyms. Since this dialect feature is most likely to occur when the vowel precedes a voiced consonant, such as /b/, /d/, and /g/, it was recommended that teachers begin the auditory discrimination exercise with words in which the vowel precedes an unvoiced consonant, as *like, ripe,* and *kite.*

The speaker's atypical New York City pronunciations of 'short a' words (so that *man* and *hat* had the same vowel sound) and consistent utterance of /r/ in final positions and before consonants (as in *car* and *fork*) were cited as illustrations of dialect variations which presented problems in auditory discrimination for some children. Workshop participants analyzed their own and each others' language patterns and related these to reading instruction problems which emerged in classrooms.

There was a discussion of the distinction between pronunciation differences and reading errors. In oral reading, children, like adults, frequently pronounce words in familiar oral forms and even substitute words with no significant losses of meaning. Thus, a child might pronounce *ride* as though it had printed *rod.* It was recommended that, unless a teacher had reason to believe that the child did not understand the meaning of the word as read, the familiar form should be accepted and that reading should not be interrupted for speech instruction. Similarly, when a child recodes a sentence like *She is a doctor* to the pattern familiar in Black dialect as *She a doctor,* it was recommended that the teacher not disrupt reading. The situation was described as analogous to one in which a reader sees *going to go* and recodes orally to *gonna go;* the concept expressed by the infinitive form of the verb was probably recognized even though it was not pronounced.

Teachers were advised that their concern for the socio-economic advancement of disadvantaged children should not lead them to hyper-correction of pupils' speech patterns since such procedures may be counterproductive. They may even discourage children from active participation in academic learning.

Beatrice Kachuck Levy



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